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G. GREEN

2,284,518

CHIP RACK

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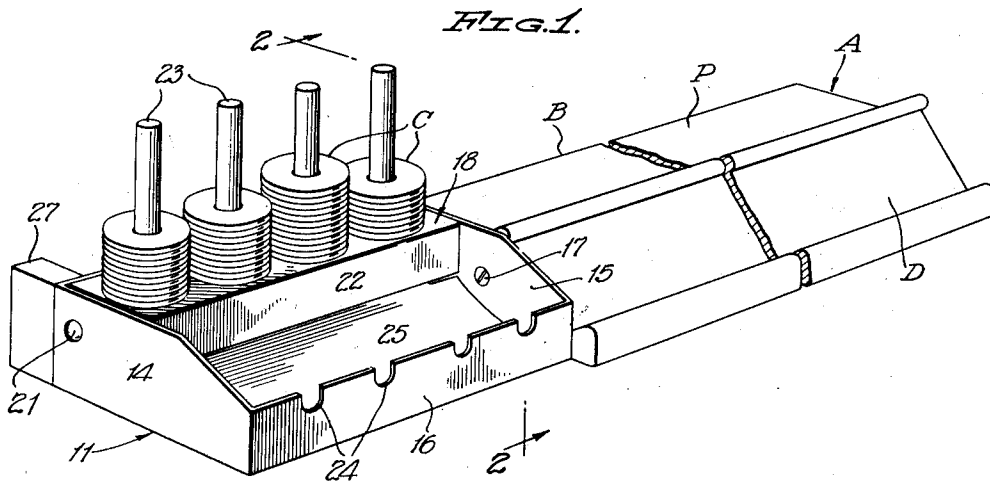


FIG. 2.

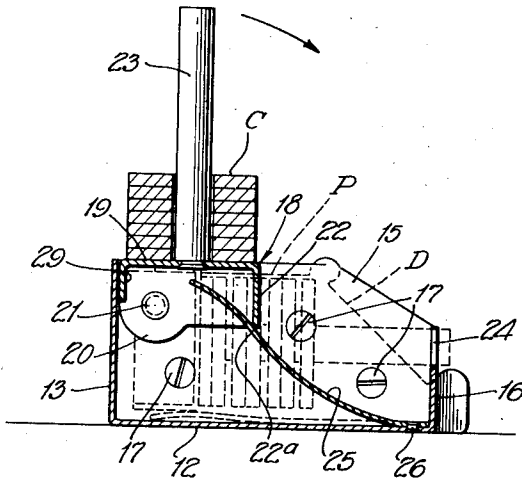


FIG. 4.

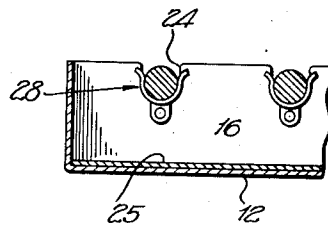
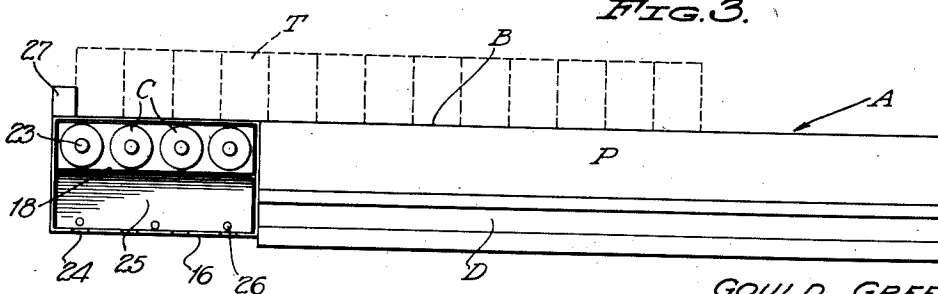


FIG. 3.



GOULD GREEN,
INVENTOR.

BY

Ely & Patterson

ATTORNEYS.

WITNESS:

Ely & Patterson

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

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CHIP RACK

Gould Green, New York, N. Y.

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6 Claims. (Cl. 273—148)

This invention relates to improvements in chip racks, and is especially adapted for use in the playing of the Chinese tile game generally known as "Mahjong."

The primary object of the invention resides in a rack for conveniently holding different colored chips used in the playing of "Mahjong" and other games in which chips are used in counting and scoring between the several players.

Another feature of the invention is to provide a chip holder consisting of different colored posts on which the corresponding color chips may be racked for keeping the same segregated for quick and accurate dispensing when the posts are in an upstanding position, there being means by which the posts may be swung to a horizontal inoperative position for compact storing purposes during which time the chips are prevented from accidentally becoming separated from the posts.

A further feature of the invention is the provision of a chip rack having an off-center chip support which is attached to one end of a Chinese tile rack to lie substantially within the confines of the end thereof when the chip posts are in inoperative position to facilitate the compact storing of the tile rack and chip rack as a unit with the other paraphernalia used in the playing of the Chinese tile game.

A still further feature is to provide a chip rack which forms a continuation of the tile rack which permits the tile rack to be made shorter, for it is the practice to build the "tile wall" against the tile rack and which consists of a greater number of tiles than the maximum number of tiles which would ever be supported at one time upon the tile rack.

A still further feature of the invention is to provide a chip rack in which the chip post support is under the influence of a leaf spring which assumes a trough shape when the chip posts are in vertical position whereby excess chips may be stored, or in which a player's chips may be temporarily placed until the player has had the opportunity to segregate them as to color, and value and rack them on the respective posts.

Other features of the invention will become apparent as the following specification is read in conjunction with the accompanying drawing, in which,

Figure 1 is a perspective view of the chip rack in open position and attached to the left end of a Chinese tile game rack.

Figure 2 is a vertical transverse sectional view substantially on the line 2—2 of Figure 1, and illustrating in dotted lines, the position of the parts when in closed position.

Figure 3 is a plan view of a complete tile rack equipped with my improved chip holder illustrating the tiles forming a wall in dotted lines.

Figure 4 is a detail sectional view illustrating an auxiliary holding means for securing the chip posts in horizontal position.

Referring to the drawing by reference characters, the numeral 10 designates the chip rack in its entirety which includes a rectangular box-like casing 11 having a flat bottom wall 12, a straight rear wall 13, opposed end walls 14 and 15, and a relatively low front wall 16. The forward portions of the top edges of the end walls 14 and 15 are inclined to meet the top edge of the front wall so that the entire cross sectional area of the casing is substantially disposed within the confines of the left end of a tile rack A of the kind used by the players when playing the Chinese tile game generally known as "Mahjong." The end wall 15 is provided with openings for the passage of screws 17 which thread into the end of the rack A, the rear wall 13 being disposed in alinement with the rear straight edge of the rack while the end wall 15 projects slightly above the top of the rack. Whereas screws are shown as a means for securing the chip rack 10 to the end of the tile rack A, other fastening means, removable or otherwise may be used if desired.

Pivotal mounted within the casing 11 and supported by the opposed side walls 14 and 15, is a chip support 18 which includes an elongated plate 19 having depending ears 20 at the ends thereof which are pivoted rearwardly of the plane of the longitudinal mid-portion. The ears fit against the inner sides of the end walls 14 and 15 adjacent the rear ends thereof and passing through the end walls and ears are headed pivot pins 21, the outer heads thereof being countersunk in the exterior of the end walls. A flange 22 is integral with the front edge of the plate 19 and extends inwardly at right angle thereto for a distance sufficient to provide ample clearance between the flange and the bottom wall 12 and rear wall 13 during movement of the chip support 18 from an upstanding position for use to an upset position when not in use. A flange 23 is integral with the rear edge of the plate 19 and is parallel to the flange 22 which closes the unsightly portion of the inside of the casing when the chip support is in upset position. Fixedly secured to the plate 18 are the

lower ends of a row of equi-distantly spaced posts or pegs 23, there being four in number of uniform lengths and round or square in cross section. Whereas four colors of chips are used in the playing of the game, the posts may be respectively of corresponding colors to receive the same, or they may be numbered according to the number value of the chips. The posts are of a length to enable their free ends to respectively enter spaced notches 24 in the front wall 16 when the chip support is in upset position as illustrated in dotted lines in Figure 2.

Secured to the casing at the corner formed by the bottom wall 12 and the front wall 16 and disposed within the casing is a curved leaf spring 25 which extends the length of the casing in one direction and which extends from the front wall 16 to a point beneath the free edge of the flange 18 when the chip support is in vertical set up position. The spring curves upwardly and provides the bottom of a trough shaped chip compartment into which loose chips may be placed until a player has had the opportunity to segregate them as to color and apply them to the respective posts 23 and said spring also acts to conceal the interior of the casing and prevents chips from accidentally falling inside and underneath the chip support with the attending inconvenience of removing chips which might become lodged in the movable parts. The spring may be made of one or more thicknesses of resilient metal and the front portion thereof is secured to the casing at the front bottom corner by screws, rivets, soldering, or by any other like means 26. The tension of the free rear edge of the spring 25 when engaging the flange 22 at 22a is sufficient to hold the plate 19 on a horizontal plane and prevent the accidental forward upsetting of the chip support 18, the rearward movement being limited by engagement of the rear flange 29 of the plate 19 with the rear wall 13 of the casing. However, the chip support 18 may be forcibly upset to cause the edge of the flange to move past center as illustrated in dotted lines in Figure 2, whereupon the action of the spring to raise the chip support is nullified, for the action of the spring at this time is to maintain the chip support in a folded upset position. The spring is now substantially flat and will tend to raise the chip support only after the same is manually swung upward to permit the edge of the flange to pass to the other side of the center of its pivotal movement. Whereas, a curved leaf spring has been shown and described and is preferable, an overthrow spring action similar to that employed in a toggle switch, or other optional means may be employed to perform the overthrow action to opposite sides of the pivotal axis of the chip support.

Colored stacks of chips C having center openings are shown as being held by the posts 23, the lowermost chip of each stack resting upon the plate 19. The chips are free to be withdrawn from the posts or additional chips may be added as the number of chips held by a player continually varies and the playing of the hands are completed. When the chip support 18 is upset to the dotted position, the front wall 16 prevents accidental separation of the chips from the posts and at which time the chip rack and chips held thereby are disposed within the confines of the casing 11 which enables the tile rack and chip rack to be packed away as a single unit.

The rear wall 13 of the chip rack provides a straight edge extension for the rear edge B of the tile rack A against which the tiles T forming the "wall" are placed as shown in Figure 3. The top portion of the end wall 15 acts as a stop wall for one end of the tiles placed upon the platform P and ledge D. The left end of the rear wall is provided with a block forming a stop shoulder 27 for the left end of the "tile wall," or if desired, the end wall 14 may be carried rearwardly beyond the rear wall 13 to perform the same function. In view of the fact that at present the number of tiles consisting of a player's concealed hand is never more than fourteen, and such tiles are placed upon the forwardly inclined ledge D of the rack A and the exposed tiles placed upon the platform P, the rack A may be made shorter for the number of tiles forming the "wall" exceed those of the hand and extend a greater length. In tile racks made of expensive material such as plastics, a saving in material and cost may be effected by employing the chip rack 10 as a straight edge extension thereof.

One of the important reasons for pivoting the chip support 18 off-center is to enable the chips C stacked on the posts 23 to clear the rear wall 13 for easy handling of the chips and for the building of the "tile wall" against the wall 13. Also, when the chip support is upset as shown in dotted lines in Figure 2, the chips must not project above the top side and rear edges of the casing.

In Figure 4 there is shown an auxiliary holding means for securing the chip support 18 in upset position. The inner side of the front wall 16 supports U-shaped spring clips 29 in register with the notches 24 to clampingly engage the respective posts 23 when they are upset to horizontal position.

If desired, an ash tray may be permanently or removably attached to the end wall 14 of the casing for the convenience of the player when using the rack unit.

While I have shown and described what I consider to be the preferred embodiment of my invention, I wish it to be understood that such materials, changes in design and construction as come within the scope of the appended claims may be resorted to if desired without departing from the spirit of the invention.

Having thus described the invention, what I claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent of the United States, is:

1. A chip rack comprising a rectangular shaped casing open at its top, a chip support pivotally mounted off center within said casing at the rear thereof, an upwardly curved leaf spring of a length substantially equal to the length of the inside of said casing and having its front portion secured at the front of said casing, the free rear edge of the spring bearing against the front underside of said chip support to hold the same in vertical set up position, said chip support being swingable forwardly to an upset horizontal position past dead center to cause said spring to hold the chip support in its upset position.

2. A chip rack comprising a rectangular shaped casing open at its top, a chip support having its ends pivotally connected to opposed side walls of said casing adjacent the rear thereof, an upwardly curved leaf spring having its front end fixed to the front of the casing, the rear portion of said leaf spring pressing against the front underside of the chip support to hold the same in vertical set up position, said curved leaf spring

defining a trough shaped bottom for the front of the casing, said chip support being swingable forwardly to an upset horizontal position past its pivotal center to cause said spring to assume a substantially flattened position to hold the chip support in its upset position.

3. A chip rack comprising a rectangular shaped casing open at its top having a flat bottom wall, opposed end walls, a rear wall, and a front wall of less height than the rear wall, a chip support comprising a plate pivoted to the opposed end walls adjacent the rear top thereof, chip receiving posts secured to and rising upwardly from said plate, a flange depending from the front of said plate, and a leaf spring having its front portion secured to the casing adjacent the front thereof, the rear free portion of said leaf spring engaging beneath said flange to hold the chip support in a vertical position for use, said chip support being forwardly swingable to cause the posts to assume a substantially horizontal upset position for rest upon said front wall, the flange acting to depress said leaf spring and assuming a position past dead center whereby the spring acts to hold the chip support in upset position.

4. A chip rack comprising a rectangular shaped casing open at its top having a flat bottom wall, opposed end walls, a rear wall, and a front wall of less height than the rear wall, a chip support comprising a plate pivoted to the opposed end walls adjacent the rear top thereof, chip receiving posts secured to and rising upwardly from said plate, a flange depending from the front of said plate, and a leaf spring having its front portion secured to the casing adjacent the front thereof, the rear free portion of said leaf spring engaging beneath said flange to hold the chip support in a vertical position for use, said chip support being forwardly swingable to cause the posts to assume a substantially horizontal upset position for rest upon said front wall, and spring clips

provided on the front wall for respectively receiving the posts when the chip support is in upset position.

5. A chip rack comprising a rectangular shaped casing open at its top, a pivoted chip support pivoted in said casing for movement to a vertical upstanding position and to a substantially horizontal upset position, said chip support including a row of spaced posts on which chips are racked, notches provided in the front wall of the casing for receiving the respective posts when the chip support is in upset position, spring means for holding the chip support in upstanding position when swung thereto, and spring clips mounted on the front wall of said casing adjacent the respective notches to clampingly engage the posts when the chip support is swung to upset position.

6. A chip rack for attachment to one end of a Chinese tile game rack comprising a rectangular shaped casing having a flat bottom wall, a front wall, opposed end walls, one of said end walls adapted to flatly abut and be secured to one end of a tile rack, a vertical rear wall adapted to be alined with straight rear edge of a tile rack when the chip rack is associated therewith to provide a continuation of the straight rear edge thereof, a chip support pivotally mounted off center to the end walls adjacent the rear thereof, an upwardly curved leaf spring of a length approximating the length of said casing and having its front portion fixed to said casing adjacent the front thereof, the rear free portion of the leaf spring pressing against the front underside of the chip support to hold the same in vertical set up position, said chip support being swingable forwardly to an upset position past its pivotal center to cause said spring to assume a substantially flattened position to hold the chip support in upset position.

GOULD GREEN.